"a"-1h-11

The belief of the Magyars in man's survival beyond the grave originates in pre-Christian times; it is deep-rooted and generally accepted. Death, therefore, is not necessarily a cause for sorrow. In his last minutes, the dying person, stretched out on the floor of the main living room, calmly takes leave from his family and friends who, in turn, entrust him with messages to be delivered to those he is about to join. The preparation of the corpse is the duty of women, who outfit the dead in his wedding attire or best outfit (in some regions, Harta e.g., in white). In the coffin (mostly black but also blue, red, or green) they place food, tobacco, favorite tools, or toys, if the dead person was a child. The grave itself always faces east. The burial ceremony is followed by the tor which is today a simple banquet, but which used to be until quite recently an occasion of joyful celebration. This feast, as with all of the Ob-Ugric peoples, actually served the purpose of entertaining and propitiating the spirit of death.

775 763 764 [462] [769]

Customs connected with marriage show surprising parallelisms with burial customs. Deceased spinsters are often buried in a wedding outfit and, in some regions, a young man who died before having a chance to get married will be given a symbolic bride who, clad in wedding attire, accompanies him to the grave and is supposed to mourn him as

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claimed it, instead, the Day of the Constitution (of the People's Republic). 796

October 31, Reformation Day, is celebrated by the Protestant population. On All Souls Day, November 2, the population honor [769] the deceased, visiting graves and lighting candles on them.

At Christmas time, nativity plays are performed (cf. Sub-paragraph 1i) by the youth of the village (betlehenesek) and gifts [431] are exchanged. The custom of the Christmas tree has begun now to spread out from the cities where it has been most common.

Special family holidays are birthdays, saint's days and, in winter the day of pig slaughtering.

The daily routine of the Magyar peasants is quite simple: 512 during the months of increased actitity, i.e. from May to October, they get up early, about 4:00 A.M. and feed the cattle and domestic animals before having breakfast themselves. At 6:00 or 7:00 A.M. they go out to the fields where they work until noon and then eat the lunch which they carry with them. Except in Transdanubia, women [462] also go out to the fields so that the villages of the Great Plains look deserted in daytime during the season. Shortly before sunset, the peasants return home to feed the animals and have their dinner.

1 [see cat. 116, pp. 106-107 -- Analyst]